

Teacher-Factors Related to Counselling Strategies affecting Guidance and Counselling in Lower Primary School in Uniformed-Forces Based Schools in Nakuru County, Kenya

Adelaide Atakha Asenahabi, Dr. Margaret Mwangi

School of Education, Kenyatta University, Kenya

Abstract: - The main aim of this study was to establish the teacher counselling strategy-related factors affecting guidance and counselling in lower primary school pupils in uniformed forces-based schools in Nakuru County. The research adopted a descriptive survey. The study sample included all the five (5) head teachers of the study schools, five (5) teacher counsellors and (30) lower primary school class teachers of the study schools. Qualitative data was obtained from the open-ended questionnaires and the interview while quantitative data was derived from the closed-ended questionnaires. The results were presented using descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions, percentages and tabulations while qualitative data was presented using texts and verbatims. The results of the study indicated that lack of appropriate strategies for counselling of lower primary school pupils, the heavy workload and other non-guidance and counselling duties such as subject teaching and training of pupils in co-curricular activities hinder provision of guidance and counselling service in lower primary schools. The study concludes that teacher counsellors do not use a variety of strategies when counselling pupils. The study recommended that schools should use play activities such as sand play in guiding and counselling the lower primary school pupils; resources need to be availed to enhance provision of the guidance and counselling services to pupils effectively; teacher counsellors should be exposed to frequent training to acquire new and varied competencies and strategies for counselling lower primary school pupils, head teachers and class teachers should fully be supportive to counselling in the uniformed –forces based schools.

Keywords: Teacher-Factors related to Counselling Strategies, Teacher Counsellor, Lower Primary School Pupils, Uniformed-Forces Based Schools

I. INTRODUCTION

The importance of guidance and counselling in learning institutions cannot be overemphasized and the role of school counsellors has changed over time. However, in the previous decade, counsellors did not exist, rather, teachers used a few minutes of their day to provide students with vocational guidance. The art of guidance and counselling has enabled the psychologically troubled in one way or the other (Masoumeh, Nazanin & Tajudin, 2012). Although counselling was started first in USA, many schools rejected it and reacted to this movement as anti-educational, arguing that

the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic should be the only thing to be taught (Bain, 2012).

In Nigeria pre-primary school and lower primary school pupils did not seem to have been exposed to proper and professional guidance and counselling (Olugbenda & Rotimi, 2006). For instance, the teacher counsellors had not performed well in the advocating strategy; a strategy that calls in for the school administration and the community to supplement the efforts of counsellors. According to Gudyanga, Wadesango, Manzira and Gudyanga, (2015), only few schools in Zimbabwe implemented guidance and counselling due to lack of knowledge in counselling and failure to network with various stakeholders in the area of guidance and counselling. It is therefore possible that the teacher counsellors may have failed in their roles for not applying a variety of strategies such as networking with other relevant authorities to make counselling successful. In Malawi Chireshe (2012), notes that guidance and counselling was affected by the under-qualification of the teacher counsellors, lack of information on guidance and counselling and less number of counsellors as compared to pupils. Similarly, in Tanzania, lack of training and lack of clear policy in schools for implementing guidance and counselling made it unsuccessful (Amani, 2015). According to Chinonyelum (2015), headteachers assigned too much work to the counsellors giving them limited time to discharge their counselling duties. This may mean that the pupils were not properly counselled by the counsellors for lack of sufficient time.

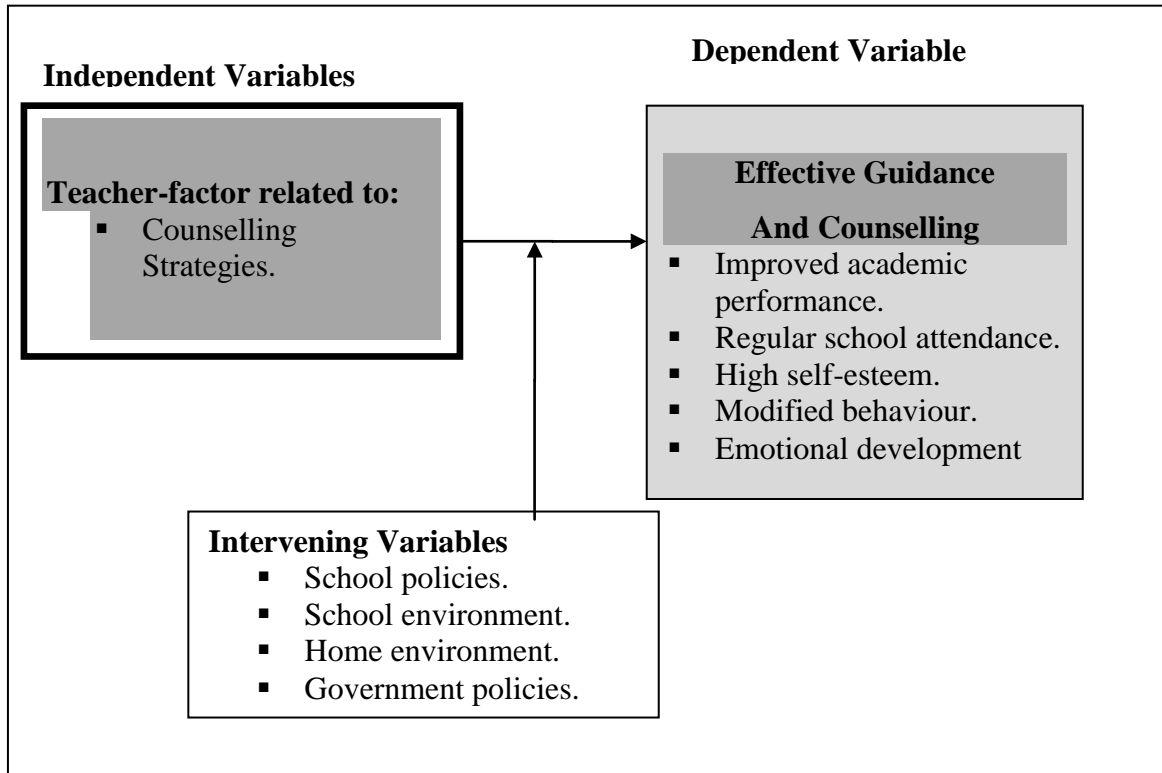
In Kenya, Ruttoh and Jepkoech (2015) showed that the teacher counsellors did not involve class teachers, parents and the administrators of the school as they conducted their roles. The teacher counsellors therefore seem not to be doing enough to help the pupils who were faced with many new and challenging problems. If the problems in children are not dealt with in time, the pupils may try inappropriate alternative adjustment mechanisms to fulfill their needs. Focus on the provision of counselling services for primary school pupils, especially for the children of the uniformed forces is considered to be very critical for proper psycho-development and holistic well-being. With the uniformed forces

encountering a great deal of challenges associated with their job descriptions to their general lifestyles, there is a high probability that the various life stressors would trickle down to affect their children. Therefore, this study endeavours to determine the teacher-factors related to counselling strategies affecting guidance and counselling in lower primary schools in uniformed-forces based schools in Nakuru County.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to establish the teacher counselling strategy related factors affecting guidance and counselling in lower primary schools in uniformed forces-based schools. This study also determined the extent and frequency to which certain activities related to counseling strategies were used by teachers in lower primary schools when guiding and counselling the pupils.

1.2 Conceptual Framework



II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher-Factors Related to Strategies when Guiding and Counselling Pupils

Daniunaite Cooper (2016), it is evident from studies worldwide that schools have guidance and counselling services put in place. The teacher counsellors need to use appropriate techniques and strategies to make the guidance and counselling effective (Zakariya & Alhaman, 2016). However, Anderson (2013) believed that a number of strategies for effective guidance and counselling such as advocating for pupils, liaising with stakeholders and reflection by the counsellors on their practice were lacking among counsellors in New Zealand. This study thus intended to find out the various counselling strategies used by teacher counsellor in the guidance and counselling of lower primary

school pupils in uniformed forces-based schools in Gilgil and Bahati sub-counties in Nakuru County.

Similarly, according to Creative Commons Attribution (2016), the counsellors in Lebanon who were trained in Western models of school counselling overlooked the unique cultural and family aspects of Lebanese society. Consequently, the teacher counsellors did not use strategies that were relevant to the culture of the Lebanese society. This therefore may have affected the counselling sessions as the counsellors may have failed to use strategies that would accommodate and favour the culture of the pupils. Moreover, Mbabazi and Bagaya (2013) revealed that, in Uganda, the teacher counsellors mostly used the individual counselling strategy which took a longer time to attend to all pupils.

In Kenya, Topister, Jepchichir and Odhiambo (2014); Owino and Odera, (2014), reported that teacher counsellors in Kenya

lacked filing systems for record keeping necessary for follow-up. In addition, the group counselling done during assembly on Monday and Friday did not give individual attention to the pupils who in most cases did not pay visits to the school counsellors for personal counselling. There is therefore the possibility that the progress of the counselled pupils may not be known by the counsellors since group counselling done during assembly has no records kept. It is therefore important to establish the strategies used by the teacher counsellors in guidance and counselling in lower primary schools.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Target Population

The research adopted a descriptive research design to establish the teacher-factors related to counselling strategies affecting guidance and counselling in lower primary schools in uniformed-forces based schools in Nakuru County. The study targeted all the five uniformed-forces based schools in Nakuru county. The study population therefore were all the five (5) headteachers, one hundred and twenty five (125) trained teachers in the five schools and the five (5) counsellors practicing in the uniformed-forces based schools in Nakuru county.

3.2 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

All the uniformed-forces based schools were considered in the study since only five schools were found within the study area. Simple random sampling was used to arrive at the sample for the lower primary class teachers. Purposive sampling was used for the headteachers and teacher counsellors. The sample size included the five (5) headteachers of the study schools, five (5) teacher counsellors and (30) lower primary class teachers of the study schools.

3.3 Research Instruments

Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data. Specified structured questionnaires were administered to teacher counsellors, head teachers and lower primary class teachers. The use of questionnaires was ideal to collect large data within a short period of time. Interview schedule was administered to teacher counsellors. The aim of the interview was to enable the researcher get more key information from the teacher counsellor.

3.4 Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted in the lower primary school in three private schools in Gilgil Sub-county. The schools selected for pilot study had similar characteristics as the study schools, since they enroll children of the uniformed personnel.

Three headteachers, three teacher counsellors and ten lower primary school classteachers who were selected randomly were given the questions of the questionnaires. The objective of the pilot study was to determine the validity and reliability of the research instruments. The pilot study helped the researcher find out whether the questions asked were clear to the respondents and could elicit consistent and clear responses. The aim of the pilot study was to pre-test the questionnaire items.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher visited the selected schools to collect data. The researcher briefed the respondents on the purpose and objectives of the study. The questionnaires were then distributed to the respondents in their respective schools. The researcher then retrieved the completed questionnaires from the respondents. This was to ensure that all the copies of the questionnaires distributed were returned. The interview for the teacher counsellors was conducted by the researcher on the same day of the visit to the schools of study.

3.6 Data Processing and Analysis

Data collected from the field was edited, coded and analysed qualitatively and quantitatively. The qualitative data was obtained from the open-ended and the interview questions while quantitative data was derived from the closed-ended questionnaires. Quantitative data was analyzed manually. It was then presented using descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions, percentages and tabulations. Qualitative data was presented in texts using the researcher's and the counsellor's words. This process was applicable for all the objectives and was appropriately used to analyse responses on counselling competencies of teacher counsellors, counselling strategies used by teacher counsellors, roles played by headteachers in supporting guidance and counselling and contributions of lower primary class teachers towards guidance and counselling of lower primary school pupils in uniformed-forces based schools.

IV. STUDY RESULTS

This section presents the data collected from the field and its analysis based on the achievement of the study objective. The teacher counsellors were required to indicate the activities they do while guiding and counselling pupils in lower primary. Their responses were interpreted and used to determine the strategies they use when guiding and counselling the pupils as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Responses of teacher counsellors on teacher counseling strategies related factors

Activities related to counselling strategies	Responses by teacher counsellors to exhibit strategies			
	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)
Easily available to pupils by visiting them in classrooms.	0(0%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	3 (60%)
Use play activities such as sand play and water play when counselling.	0(0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (100%)
Encourage and make use of pupil peer counsellors.	3 (60%)	1 (20%)	0 (0%)	1 (20%)
Involve lower primary school class teachers in handling issues that involve pupils in their classes.	4 (80%)	1(20%)	0 (0%)	1 (20%)
Establish linkages with other stakeholders such as sponsor and community in the matters of counselling	0 (0%)	1(20%)	0 (0%)	4 (80%)
Use individual counselling more than group counselling	0(0%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	3 (60%)
Use of audio recording for future review of the counselling sessions	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (100%)
Use varied activities/materials such as songs, quotes pictures or toys.	0 (0%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	3 (60%)

The results, as shown in Table 1, show that there are some statistically insignificant strategies in guidance and counselling being used by the teacher counsellors when offering their services. Majority 4(80%) of the respondents were of the view that group counselling strategy was commonly used as opposed to individual guidance and counselling. Majority of the counsellors 3(60%) confessed that they never used the individual counselling strategy. The group counselling was done in classes by scheduling guidance and counselling on the block timetable while others counselled all pupils in the school during school assembly. Most 4(80%) of the teacher counsellors reported that they would involve class teachers in handling issues affecting pupils in lower primary school. From the interview schedule four out of the five counsellors confessed that they left the pupils in lower primary to be counselled by their class teachers who had no knowledge about guidance and counselling and they sometimes took a long time before handling the issues that affected the pupils in their classes. They said:

“The pupils in lower primary are handled by their teachers in their classes. I only visit them once in a while to sing or just see their progress but, I don’t counsel them because I feel they may understand their teachers better than me.”

From the interview with the teacher counsellors, four of them reported that they do not liaise with the parents on issues concerning their children. In addition, the teacher counsellors did not sensitize the public on guidance and counselling activities of the schools and try to mobilize community support and input in the guidance and counselling of the lower primary pupils in the uniformed-forces based schools. These findings are similar to the findings of Gudyanga *et. al.*, (2015) in Zimbabwe and Topister *et. al.*, (2014); Owino and Odera (2014) in Kenya whose findings revealed that the teacher counsellors visited pupils in classrooms and during assembly time while others time-tabled it like other subjects. Group

counselling may not give individual attention to the pupils of lower primary who do not visit the teacher counsellors for personal counselling (Topister *et. al.*, 2014). All the teacher counsellors 5(100%) reported that they have not incorporated the aspect of behaviour improvement by involving the children in diverse play or group activities. This is in contrast with Campbell and Goss (2004) who reported that when sand play activities are used in counselling can be develop mentally appropriate since it has proved to be more useful in managing cognitive and behavioural problems than the “talking therapy”. None of the teacher counsellors 0(0%) used audio recording technique during the counselling sessions. This would help the counsellor get information that was not captured during the counselling session. Majority of the teacher counsellor 3(60%) were willing to set up peer counselling strategy, yet they had no idea on how to roll it out within the lower primary school setting. Majority 4(80%) of the teacher counsellors did not advocate for the pupils to the community as well as the sponsors of the schools in which the study was conducted. Advocacy could help mobilize support and the input of the community and sponsor in guiding and counselling of the pupils. The researcher noted that teacher counsellors seemed not to be conversant with them and therefore did not use them in their practice of counselling the pupils in the lower primary school. The current study is also in line with Anderson (2013) who believed that a number of strategies for effective guidance and counselling such as advocating for pupils, liaising with stakeholders, use of play activities, audio recording, advocacy, use of family conferences and reflection by the counsellors on their practice were lacking among counsellors in New Zealand.

V. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that teacher counsellors do not use a variety of strategies when counselling pupils. Pupils in lower primary school need to be counselled using strategies that make counselling interesting and enjoyable. As a result of the

inappropriate strategies used, the pupils seem not to be getting the much needed help from the counsellors, especially when it is mostly group counselling strategy used.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The teacher counsellors should come up with unique school policies in guidance and counselling that will ensure that all stakeholders of the uniformed-forces based schools are involved in the counselling of these pupils.
2. Teacher counsellor should ensure that they make counselling sessions for pupils in lower primary schools interesting and enjoyable by employing different strategies such as the use of Teacher counsellors should plan, execute their duties, keep records of counselling sessions and continually assess their counselling sessions in order to make follow-ups and referrals.
3. Guidance and counselling teachers should be relieved of non-guidance and counselling duties such as games and other co-curricular activities to enable them provide sufficient and effective guidance and counselling services.
4. Class teachers should always collaborate with the teacher counsellors and other teachers in the school by accepting and respecting the work of the counsellors through involving them in matters of pupils in their classes. This will make the counsellors feel valued and in turn become motivated in their work of counselling pupils of lower primary school.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Ajowi, J. O., & Simatwa, E. M. (2010). The role of guidance and counseling in promoting student discipline in secondary schools in Kenya: A case study of Kisumu district *Educational Research and Reviews*, 5(5), 263-272.
- [2]. Amani, H. (2015). *The Status of Career Counselling in Higher Learning Institutions in Tanzania*. Department of Educational Psychology and Curriculum Studies. Mkawa University College of Education, Tanzania. Retrieved from www.ijetssnet.com
- [3]. Anderson, D.(2013). *Guidance and Counselling in Schools: Survey Findings*. Education Review Office. Retrieved from www.ero.govt.nz.
- [4]. Bain, S. (2012). *School Counselling: A Review of Contemporary Issues*. Texas A &M University Kingsville. *Research in Higher Education Journal*.
- [5]. Chinonyelum, E. (2015). *The Challenges of Guidance and Counselling Practices as Perceived by Secondary School Counsellors in Enugu State Nigeria*. Paper Presented to Department of Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Nigeria.
- [6]. Chireshe, R. (2012). *Career Guidance and Counselling Provisions at a South African University: Career Advisors's Reflections*. College of Education, Department of Psychology of Education, University of south Africa. Creative Commons Attribution (2016). *Wikipedia Foundation*. Retrieved from <http://wikipedia.org/wikicategorypeople who work with children>.
- [7]. Daniunaite Copper (2016). *Counselling in UK Primary Schools: Outcomes and Predictors of Change, Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*. Retrieved from www.gov.uk/government/Publication's.on.
- [8]. Gudyanga, E., Wadesango, N., Manzira, R., & Gudyanga, A.(2015). *Implementation of Guidance and Counselling in Secondary Schools in Chinhoyi Urban Midlands State University*. Faculty of Education, Gweru, Zimbabwe.
- [9]. Masoumeh, A., Nazanin, B., & Tajudin, N. (2012). *The challenges of high school counsellors in workplace*. A research Paper Presented to Faculty of Education, Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Teknology, Malaysia Elsevier Ltd.
- [10]. Mbabazi, G., & Bagaya (2013). Guidance and Counselling Strategies and Conformity with Code of Conduct in Secondary Schools in Gulu Municipality, Uganda. *Macrothink Institute. International Journal of Education* Vol.5. No.2.
- [11]. Ruttoh, R. & Jepkkoeh, R. (2015). Planning and implementation of Guidance and Counselling Activities in Secondary School; A case of Kamariny Division of Keiyo District, Kenya. *Journal of Education and Practice* Vol.6 No.5
- [12]. Topister, R., & Jephchirchir, R. (2014). Determinants of Guidance and Counselling Programme in addressing Students Social Adjustments in Schools in Siaya District. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* Vol.4 No.4 2014.